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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 11/13/07

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Articles:

1) Prime Minister Fukuda's schedule for overseas travel officially decided; Japan-US summit to occur on Nov. 16

SANKEI (Page 3) (Full)
November 13, 2007

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's schedules to visit the United States and Singapore were decided yesterday. The prime minister will leave for Washington on Nov. 15 and meet on the 16th with US President George W. Bush. He will return home on the 17th. He will then leave for Singapore on the 19th and return to Tokyo early on the morning of the 22nd. In Singapore, Fukuda is expected to attend a summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plus Three (Japan, China and South Korea), as well as an East Asia summit.

Referring in a press conference to the fact that the US government has been considering delisting North Korea as state sponsor of terrorism, Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura expressed

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concern, saying, "The abduction issue is different from other issues, because it is deeply related to the sentiments of Japanese public. The abductions are a state crime, and the issue means a violation of the human rights of many Japanese nationals. (Delisting the North as state sponsor of terrorism) will not have a positive impact on Japan-US relations."

2) Japan-US summit to take place on Nov. 16

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
November 13, 2007

Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura announced in a press conference last evening that Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda will leave for the United States on Nov. 15 and hold talks with President George W. Bush on the 16th. It will be the first overseas trip for the prime minister since he took office.

Fukuda is expected to tell Bush of Japan's policy of strengthening the Japan-US alliance, as well as of promoting Asia policy.

Fukuda told the press last night:

"Japan's relations with the United States are very deep and wide. I want to tell the President my views on Japan's foreign policy and other issues. I would like to hear the US views, as well."

3) Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura: Issue of delisting North Korea as state sponsor of terrorism will be discussed in Japan-US summit

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 13, 2007

Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura revealed yesterday the expectation that the question of whether the United States will remove North Korea from its list of state sponsors of terrorism will be discussed in the upcoming meeting on Nov. 16 between Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and US President George W. Bush. Machimura stated in a press conference yesterday:

"The United States has reiterated that it will not try to improve

relations with North Korea at the expense of the Japan-US relationship. At any rate, this issue will be discussed in the Japan-US summit."

Asked how Japan would respond if the US delisted the North as a state sponsor of terrorism with no progress on the abduction issue, Machimura pointed out: "The abduction issue has a significance that differs from other topics of discussion. (Delisting) would not have a positive impact on Japan-US relations."

4) Prime minister to ask US president to turn dual use of Yokota Base into reality

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Full)
November 10, 2007

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda said yesterday that he would ask United States President Bush during their meeting planned for next week to turn a plan to use Yokota Air Base as joint military-civilian airport into reality at an early date.

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In replying to questions from reporters at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) last night, the prime minister said: "It is necessary (for Japan and the US) to further discuss the issue at working-level talks. . . . This is an idea that our side should take up (during the Japan-US summit)."

Prior to this, Fukuda met with Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara at the Kantei. Ishihara urged the prime minister to work on the US to move forward the talks on military-civilian joint use of the base, remarking: "Securing air access in the Tokyo metropolitan area will lead to securing national power."

The Japanese and US leaders agreed in their meeting in May 2003 to look into the feasibility of military-civilian joint use of Yokota Base. Following the agreement, both sides started talks in October last year. They planned to wind up the talks within 12 months, but they have yet to reach a conclusion.

5) Yomiuri Shimbun poll: 51 PERCENT approve continuation of refueling operations in Indian Ocean, reaching majority for first time; 56 PERCENT negative about Ozawa remaining in office

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
November 13, 2007

Yomiuri Shimbun carried out a nationwide opinion poll on continuation of refueling operations in the Indian Ocean by the Maritime Self-Defense Agency (MSDF) on Nov. 10-11, based on an interview formula. The poll found that 51 PERCENT were in favor of continuing the operations, while 40 PERCENT were against it. This is the first time the Yomiuri opinion poll has seen majority support for continuing the MSDF operation. Likewise, to a question on the new antiterrorism special measures bill to be put to a vote in a Lower House plenary session on Nov. 13, 49 PERCENT approved it, topping the 39 PERCENT who opposed it.

Looking at the results by party affiliation, 69 PERCENT of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) supporters were in favor of continuing the operation, while 24 PERCENT were against it. Among Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) supporters, 36 PERCENT supported it, while 62 PERCENT opposed it. Among swing voters, support was 53 PERCENT and opposition 42 PERCENT .

The public approval rating for the Fukuda cabinet dropped to 52.2 PERCENT , down 6.9 points from the October poll. The nonapproval rating increased to 36 PERCENT , up 9.3 points from the previous survey. The poll was carried out for the first time since the effort to create an LDP-DPJ coalition came to light. Support for the LDP dropped to 34.3 PERCENT , down 3.5 points, while support for the DPJ, which rejected the grand coalition proposal, rose to 22.5 PERCENT , up 4.5 points.

6) Nikkei poll: 44 PERCENT support resumption of refueling

operations, 37 PERCENT opposed; Support for resumption a majority in three surveys in row

NIKKEI (Page 3) (Full)
November 13, 2007

According to a Nikkei poll on the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling operation in the Indian Ocean, 44 PERCENT of respondents replied that the operations should be resumed, exceeding

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37 PERCENT who opposed the idea. This is the fourth questionnaire regarding the MSDF refueling operations, and the first since the MSDF ended the operations with the expiration of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law on Nov. 1. The number of those who supported the operation topped the respondents who opposed it in the second poll. Since then supporters have had a majority in three polls in a row.

Regarding those who supported resuming the operation, differences in stances according to party affiliation were distinct, with 60 PERCENT of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) supporters in favor of it, while only 38 PERCENT of Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) supporters favored it. However, compared with the previous survey, the support rate among LDP supporters has dropped by 8 points, but support jumped by 4 points among DPJ supporters. Likewise, the number of LDP supporters who were against continuing operations rose by 5 points, while this rate among DPJ supporters dropped by 8 points.

Among swing voters who have no party affiliation, those who replied that the operation should not be resumed reached 50 PERCENT, up 19 points. These who said that the operation should be resumed slipped to 23 PERCENT, down 15 points.

The results indicated that understanding of the refueling operation has deepened, compared with the results of the August poll, in which more than 50 PERCENT of respondents were against an extension of the antiterror special measures law. However, the number of pollees who supported a resumption of the operation still falls short of a majority. Public opinion will likely affect whether a decision will be reached on the legislation and deliberations on a censure motion against Prime Minister Fukuda, which the opposition camp is considering.

7) Sankei-FNN Poll: 51 PERCENT favor revote on new terrorism bill; Fukuda support rate plummets to 41.1 PERCENT

SANKEI (Page 3) (Excerpts)
November 13, 2007

In an opinion poll conducted by the Sankei Shimbun and FNN on Nov. 10-11, the support rate for the cabinet led by Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda plummeted to 41.1 PERCENT, down 14.2 percentage points from 55.3 PERCENT in the previous survey (on Sept. 26-27). This figure is almost the same as the nonsupport rate of 40.3 PERCENT. Observers see this result as reflecting public criticism of the grand-coalition idea proposed during earlier meetings between Fukuda and Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa, as well as of Fukuda's failure to come up with measures to deal with the current state in which the opposition camp has control of the House of Councillors.

In the survey, 60.5 PERCENT voiced opposition to the idea of a grand coalition between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the DPJ, while only 26.8 PERCENT favored it. Even so, 68.4 PERCENT praised the fact that party head talks were held. The survey also showed that many respondents favor talks between the ruling and opposition blocs on necessary policies, with 90.9 PERCENT expressing support for policy talks between both sides.

Asked about Ozawa's announcement and then retraction of his resignation, 67.1 PERCENT said that it was hard to understand, but

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45.9 PERCENT said his decision was good, while 40.8 PERCENT were against it. The survey thus found many people placing high expectations on Ozawa's capabilities.

The support rate for the LDP stood at 32.2 PERCENT , down 1.7 points from 33.9 PERCENT in the previous survey, while that of the DPJ was also down 1.6 points to 26.5 PERCENT from 28.1 PERCENT .

Asked about the propriety of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, those who supported the operation increased 0.8 point to 51.8 PERCENT , outnumbering the percentage of those against it at 38.2 PERCENT . The survey also showed that 51.2 PERCENT supported the use of the ruling camp's two-thirds majority in the House of Representatives in order to enact the antiterrorism bill in the Lower House if the bill is rejected in Upper House, surpassing 37.2 PERCENT opposition. The survey found that a majority is in favor of the MSDF continuing its refueling mission.

8) Poll: 55 PERCENT don't support 'grand coalition' initiative

NIKKEI (Top play) (Abridged)
November 13, 2007

The Nihon Keizai Shimbun conducted a public opinion survey on Nov. 10-12, in which respondents were asked if they supported the "grand coalition initiative" that came up in a recent meeting of Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, who is president of his ruling Liberal Democratic Party, and Ichiro Ozawa, president of the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto). In response to this question, only 27 PERCENT answered "yes," with 55 PERCENT saying "no." The rate of public support for the DPJ was 28 PERCENT , down 4 percentage points from the last survey taken in late October. This result can be taken as reflecting the recent flap over Ozawa's once-announced intent to resign. The popularity gap between the DPJ and the LDP increased again.

In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the LDP rose 4 points to 42 PERCENT , with the DPJ falling to the level before this July's election for the House of Councillors. The severe rating for the DPJ is expected to affect the tug of war between the ruling and coalition camps over how to schedule Diet deliberations for the days ahead and when to dissolve the House of Representatives for a general election.

The approval rating for the Fukuda cabinet was 55 PERCENT , leveling off from the last survey. The disapproval rating was 33 PERCENT , up 2 points.

The survey was taken by Nikkei Research Inc. over the telephone on a random digit dialing (RDD) basis. For the survey, samples were chosen from among men and women aged 20 and over across the nation. A total of 1,514 households with one or more voters were sampled, and answers were obtained from 919 persons (60.7 PERCENT).

9) Lower House special committee adopts new antiterrorism bill with majority approval by LDP, New Komeito; Legislation to clear Lower House today

YOMIURI (Top play) (Excerpts)
November 13, 2007

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The House of Representatives Special Committee on Prevention of Terrorism yesterday adopted a new antiterrorism special measures bill to resume the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean with majority approval by the Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito. The bill is expected to clear a Lower House plenary session today and be sent to the House of Councillors. The government and ruling parties intend to explain the bill and take questions at an Upper House plenary session tomorrow to begin deliberations. However, the major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto), which holds the initiative in the Upper House, is set to put up do-or-die resistance in the chamber. Given

the situation, deliberations on the bill (in the Upper House) are unlikely to start until after Nov. 19, after Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda returns home from the United States.

In the event the new antiterrorism legislation is rejected by the Upper House, the ruling bloc is likely to call a Lower House plenary session to readopt it there by a two-thirds majority. That might prompt the DPJ to submit a censure motion against the prime minister, setting off a pitched battle between the ruling and opposition camps.

The new antiterrorism bill, designed to replace the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law which expired on Nov. 1, stipulates that (1) the MSDF's activities are to be limited to providing water and fuel oil to vessels of the United States, Britain, and other countries engaged in the maritime interdiction operation; (2) the area of activities is limited to the Indian Ocean, including the Persian Gulf; and (3) the term of the activities is set at one year.

10) No prospects for Upper House deliberations on new antiterrorism bill after it clears Lower House today

SANKEI (Top play) (Excerpts)
November 13, 2007

The new antiterrorism special measures bill to resume the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean was adopted last evening by the House of Representatives Special Committee on Prevention of Terrorism by a majority vote by Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito. With the bill expected to clear the Lower House in a plenary session this afternoon, the battle between the ruling and opposition camps is now likely to shift to the House of Councillors, which is controlled by the opposition bloc. Although the LDP and New Komeito are planning to enact the bill before the current Diet session ends on December 15, the opposition camp is expected to put up do-or-die resistance. Even a slight impasse in the deliberations might result in a re-extension of the Diet session. Even if the Upper House forcibly takes a vote, the bill is certain to be voted down (by the opposition parties). In such a case, the focus should be whether or not the ruling camp readopts it in the Lower House in accordance with the two-thirds majority clause.

11) DPJ plans to prioritize Iraq legislation over new antiterrorism bill

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
November 13, 2007

The major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) held at its party headquarters yesterday a Diet liaison meeting of

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President Ichiro Ozawa and Diet Affairs and policy chiefs of the two chambers of the Diet. In the session, they confirmed a policy course to prioritize deliberations on a (DPJ-presented) bill to abolish the Iraq Special Measures Law over a new antiterrorism bill.

Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama explained the reason this way to

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reporters at party headquarters: "The Air Self-Defense Force has been cooperating with the US military in Iraq. The bill regarding Iraq is more important than the new antiterrorism regarding Afghanistan. It is also our national obligation to thoroughly pursue the improprieties involving the Defense Ministry." He thus revealed the DPJ's short-term plan to pursue the cover-up of the amount of fuel oil the Maritime Self-Defense Force provided to a (US) oiler and the lavish entertainment of former Vice-Defense Minister Takemasa Moriya.

12) DPJ to reject early Upper House deliberations on new terrorism bill; Government, ruling parties struggling to readjust timetable

YOMIURI (Page4) (Full)
November 13, 2007

Given the certainty of a new antiterrorism bill clearing a House of Representatives plenary session today, the ruling and opposition blocs are in a pitched battle over a timetable for the bill's deliberations in House of Councillors. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto), which holds the initiative in the Upper House, plans to block the government's and ruling camp's plan to begin Upper House deliberations early. The government and the ruling bloc are now being forced to readjust the timetable by, for instance, changing the schedules for the prime minister's foreign trips.

Liberal Democratic Party Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Tadamori Oshima after the adoption yesterday of the new antiterrorism legislation by the Lower House Special Committee on Prevention of Terrorism indicated to reporters that there would be no problem with a committee vote, saying: "Showing maximum understanding to the opposition bloc's demands, we have conducted sufficient deliberations and Diet testimony by sworn and unsworn witnesses."

The government and ruling parties plan to make utmost efforts to enact the bill before the current Diet session closes on December 15. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda stressed at a government and ruling parties' liaison meeting, held at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) yesterday, that the policy course to (enact the new antiterrorism legislation during the current Diet session) remains unchanged.

Meanwhile, DPJ Secretary-General Yukio Hatoyama said: "With his summit meeting with President George W. Bush coming up, Prime Minister Fukuda forcibly took a vote in order to take a souvenir to Washington. It was outrageous."

Unlike the Lower House, where the ruling bloc holds a two-thirds majority, it would be extremely difficult to conduct deliberations at the ruling bloc's pace in the opposition-controlled Upper House.

The government and the ruling parties initially planned to explain the new antiterrorism bill and take questions at an Upper House plenary session on Nov. 14 in the presence of the prime minister. However, in yesterday's meeting between the LDP and DPJ Diet affairs committee chairmen, DPJ Upper House Diet affairs chief Susumu Yanase

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argued, "We would like the Diet to deliberate on the (DPJ-presented) bill to rescind the Iraq Special Measures Law first. Otherwise, we cannot accept the plan to deliberate on the antiterrorism legislation." The two sides failed to find common ground.

Upper House plenary sessions are regularly held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Because the prime minister will be visiting the United States on Nov. 16, if the Upper House fails to begin deliberations on Nov. 14, the next regular session will be Nov. 19.

The government and ruling parties originally considered the prime minister's foreign trip to be "for one week from Nov. 15." But they have changed the prime minister's return home to Nov. 17 with deliberations at a Nov. 19 Upper House plenary session in mind.

13) DPJ head Ozawa before party head talks with Fukuda orders party to include in counterproposal possible participation in refueling activities, leaving room for talks with government, ruling parties

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Full)
November 13, 2007

Mainichi Shimbun learned that Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) President Ichiro Ozawa in mid-October prior to the party head talks with Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda had ordered a senior official of the Policy Research Committee, which is now drafting a counterproposal to the new antiterrorism special measures legislation, to incorporate the phrase "will consider possible participation in water-and-oil-supply operations," though subject to a UN resolution. This order, which could leave room for revision talks with the government and the ruling parties, will likely affect future deliberations on the bill in the Upper House.

Regarding the party head talks, which took place on Nov. 2, the ruling camp insisted that Ozawa indicated a stance of cooperating for passage of the new antiterrorism special measures bill, provided that the ruling camp agrees to confer on a permanent law allowing the overseas dispatch of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) personnel. However, Ozawa gave a conflicting response, "The prime minister pledged that if a grand coalition is formed, he would not insist on passage of the new antiterror legislation."

Ozawa's pet argument on a permanent law enabling the overseas dispatch of SDF personnel is that it must be premised on a UN resolution. If the government accepts this principle in talks with the DPJ on a permanent law, and the new antiterror legislation is revised based on it, Ozawa's instruction would mean that he was looking into the possibility of his argument being accepted.

Ozawa during a press conference on Nov. 7 revealed that some person approached him about a possible grand coalition two months ago. There is the possibility that he gave that order with a grand coalition in mind. According to a senior official of the Policy Research Committee, Ozawa himself presented a paper that incorporated water-and-oil supply operations during talks with senior officials of the panel. In response to the order given by Ozawa, the Foreign and Defense Affairs Division responsible for compiling a counterproposal looked into the possibility at an executive meeting, but deleted the phrase, with a number of participants noting that such a phrase could lead to a misunderstanding that the DPJ will support the antiterrorism special measures bill. A senior Policy Research Committee official pointed

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out, "When we were given that order, we did not understand its meaning. However, it might have been a strategic move for Ozawa to respond to revision talks."

14) Former top defense executive Miyazaki wined and dined senior US officials aiming at obtaining US force-realignment projects (Asahi)

ASAHI (Top play) (Excerpts)
November 10, 2007

Motonobu Miyazaki, a former senior managing director of Yamada Yoko Corp., a trading firm specializing in defense-equipment procurement, has been arrested on charges that include embezzlement of company funds. It has been learned from an informed source that Miyazaki used a secret slush fund from his company's money, which he dug up under the pretext of it being an executive reward, to wine and dine senior US government officials. It was also learned that former top executive Miyazaki had said his aim was to gather information about such matters as projects that would accompany the realignment of US forces in Japan. The defense-related trading firm Nihon Mirise, which Miyazaki established last fall after he left Yamada Corp., planned to participate in realignment projects then being planned, such as the one on Guam.

According to the Ministry of Defense's investigation, whenever senior US government officials were treated to dinner, former Vice Defense Minister Moriya was sometimes present. The special investigation team of the Tokyo Prosecutors Office is continuing its investigation to find out whether the former executive took advantage of that opportunity.

According to informed sources at Yamada Corp., when senior officials and former officials from the Pentagon, where there were good contacts, and from the State Department visited Japan, former senior executive Miyazaki would repeatedly wine and dine them, such as taking them to a high-class Japanese restaurant in Tokyo. Reportedly, he used slush-money from a special account at bank to cover the costs.

15) Opening ceremony of museum at former Prime Minister Nakasone's Hinode Lodge

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 10) (Slightly abridged)
Evening, November 10, 2007

A private lodge called "Hinode Lodge," which former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone had owned before he donated it to Hinode Town in Tokyo last year, will be opened to the public as a museum on Nov. 11. Prior to the opening of the museum, a commemorative ceremony was held on the 10th with the attendance of Tokyo Gov. Shintaro Ishihara and other officials. At the lodge, the Japan-US summit was held on Nov. 11, 1983, between Nakasone and then US President Ronald Reagan. The two top leaders had a close relationship, calling each other "Ron" and "Yasu." Nakasone served Japanese tea to the president and his wife.

Nakasone revealed that he had proposed to Reagan, "Why don't we hold a meeting on Japanese soil, not on the red carpet or under the chandelier?" He then added: "The lodge was an important place for me to refresh myself from the heavy burden as prime minister. It is an honor that the lodge will be used as a cultural property."

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16) Vice Foreign Minister Yachi: Six-party foreign ministerial within the year difficult

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
November 13, 2007

Administrative Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi indicated in a press conference yesterday that it would be difficult to hold a six-party foreign ministerial before the end of this year. Yachi pointed out: "The six countries have yet to decide what issues they should discuss in a foreign ministerial and what results they want to produce." China, which chairs the six-party talks, has sounded out the other five countries on holding a foreign ministerial sometime in early- or mid-December. US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill has said, however, that holding a foreign ministerial will be difficult due to the difficulty of coordinating the schedules of the foreign ministers of the six countries.

17) Japan-China talks on gas-field development to be upgraded to ministerial level

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Full)
November 12, 2007

Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura intends to focus on the issue of developing gas fields in the East China Sea during an upcoming meeting with his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi in Beijing on Nov. 30. He plans to urge the Chinese government to make a political decision to resolve the issue.

In the gas-field talks held so far by bureau-chief-level officials from both sides, Japan has proposed jointly developing gas fields near the Japan-set exclusive economic zone (EEZ) median boundary line. China, however, has declined Japan's offer, calling for joint development of the gas fields on the Japanese side of the line. The two countries have decided to hold the 11th bureau-chief-level talks in Tokyo on Nov. 14 to continue to discuss where they should be jointly developed.

However, Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director General Kenichiro Sasae said in a meeting of the Liberal Democratic Party's special committee on maritime issues on Oct. 31: "China told us in an unofficial meeting that it would be possible (to jointly develop gas fields around the median line), depending on how Japan deals with the issue." Keeping such a change in China's attitude in mind, the Foreign Ministry hopes to move the talks forward by upgrading the bureau-chief-level meeting to a foreign ministerial.

In a press conference on Nov. 10, Koumura expressed his desire to see substantive progress on the gas-field issue before Prime Minister Fukuda visits China at the end of this year or early next year.

DONOVAN